



GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL SUPPORT FOR CME EVENTS

PREAMBLE

The European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology (EBAC) recognizes the important contribution of the healthcare industry to continuing medical education (CME). In recent years, however, the impact of promotional information on the content of CME activities has received increasing attention.

EBAC believes that it is necessary to adopt a principled but balanced approach that will guarantee unbiased CME as well as promote and enhance cooperation with the healthcare industry for the benefit of physicians, and in turn their patients.

Although the objective of EBAC is to preserve the integrity of the medical profession in relation to CME and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), it also recognizes the rights of the pharmaceutical and equipment/device industries as business entities to represent their own interests. EBAC wishes to avoid conflicts of interest between the medical profession and the industry.

EBAC believes in the ethical conduct of those involved in organizing medical education, and the following guidelines are meant to be a formal expression of the principles already well known to and accepted by the above mentioned parties.

GUIDELINES

Guiding principles

- **A CME activity has a scientific and educational purpose only. Undue promotion of specific industry products during the training sessions is not permitted.** If this principle is not respected, EBAC will refuse further accreditation to the Provider.
- The Provider has the exclusive right to design and to execute the CME activity. This includes the definition of the scientific programme, choice of speakers, and the content of the course.
- The industry partner granting financial support may suggest one or more speakers for the CME course (activity), but the Provider is not obliged to accept the proposal.
- In any CME activity a balanced presentation of the topic must be given.
- The supporting company will be acknowledged on CME materials as having provided the sponsorship.
- The supporting company must not use the EBAC logo or its name in any of its own promotional activities. The company's support is acknowledged directly on the sponsored CME activity materials. The CME course materials are supposed to serve specific educational purposes and cannot serve for promotional activities of the supporting company.

Acknowledgement

- Educational support can be acknowledged in the CME activity's promotional brochures, syllabus, final programme and other CME course materials.
- Reference to specific products using trade names should be avoided.

Exhibits and promotion

- When commercial exhibits are part of the CME activity, arrangements for the commercial exhibition shall not influence planning or interfere with the presentation of the CME activity.
- No promotional activities should be held in the CME course room. The only form of promotion permitted is the acknowledgement that the company has contributed to the educational programme by way of a grant.

Commercially organized satellite sessions and social events

- **The accredited CME event/activity should be clearly distinguished from commercially organized sessions, known as “satellite sessions”.**
These and accompanying social events should not compete with, nor take precedence over, the accredited CME sessions.

Disclosure

- Speakers have to disclose existing financial arrangements with the commercial company contributing to the CME event.

The Disclosure Form has to be signed by Speakers and Organizing/Scientific Committee members, be archived by the Provider, and shown to EBAC monitors on request (the form can be downloaded from the EBAC website)

Financial

Management of funds from commercial supporters

- The following forms of grants are recognized:
 - An **unrestricted educational grant** is recommended. This grant should be paid to the Provider directly without additional conditions.
 - **Restricted grants to reimburse expenses** for:
 - Speakers (all expenses, travel only, accommodation only, honorarium, etc)
 - Support for catering
 - Other expenses (e.g. printed materials, equipment loan etc.)
- In the case of a unrestricted educational grant the Providers are independent in their use of contributed funds. In this situation, they receive funds from the commercial company and then pay all expenses, including the honoraria of the faculty.
- In the case of restricted grants, Industry should not provide honoraria, accommodation or travel expenses for speakers beyond those considered reasonable to accomplish the educational task.
- **Written agreement between the supporting company and the Provider of the CME Programme is recommended**, stating that the activity is educational and non-promotional, and that the company will play no role in the design or conduct of the programme.
- **Transparency** – the Provider must be accountable and, upon request, be able to report information concerning the expenditure of funds received from the supporting industry.

Documentation

EBAC requires the following documentation concerning commercially supported CME activities:

- A letter of agreement with the industry sponsor specifying the conditions of acceptance of the educational grant (and the details of the support provided in case of restricted grants) and a clear statement of provider responsibility for planning, content, and execution of the educational activity;
- The disclosure of conflict of interest forms, signed by the speakers;
- Any letters and follow-up documents concerning a problem or complaint related to the industry commercial support of the accredited CME activity.